



# NEWS RELEASE

GOVERNOR'S COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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## BREDESEN ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT KIDS AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

### GOVERNOR PROMOTES YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM

**Nashville** - Governor Phil Bredesen today joined with philanthropist Clarence Day, Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton, and others to announce a \$1.5 million grant from the Day Foundation that will be matched by the state Department of Children's Services to provide expanded support for children leaving foster care in Shelby County.

The Day Foundation grant will help about 300 teens who are aging out of the state's foster care system transition to independent, adult living. The program already helps nearly 200 young adults find their first jobs, secure affordable housing, complete their educations and obtain health care.

The services provided by this grant will complement the child mentoring program that Governor Bredesen unveiled last week for children who are still in state custody.

"This is a natural next step to the mentoring efforts we've just launched," said Governor Bredesen. "These efforts work together toward the same goal of providing the right tools, support and opportunities to help every child achieve his or her dream. I appreciate the leadership and commitment to these young people and their success by the Day Foundation and Youth Villages."

The Governor's mentoring initiative will provide young people in state custody with a positive, adult influence to help support them in making the right decisions as they grow toward adulthood. The Day Foundation grant will extend those efforts by providing support and assistance once the teen transitions to adult living.

The services funded through the Day Foundation grant will be operated through Youth Villages, a Memphis-based non-profit organization that works with children and families. The Youth Villages Transitional Living program started in 1999 through a grant from the Day Foundation, a Memphis-based philanthropy for underserved children.

Viola Miller, Commissioner of the Department of Children's Services - which oversees the state's foster care system, Karen Mathis, President of the American Bar Association, and representatives from Youth Villages also attended the event.

Adult Tennesseans interested in becoming a mentor to a child in foster care must commit to taking a mentoring training class and pass a mandatory background check. Individuals interested in applying to be a mentor can call 1-866-519-LIFT (5438) to receive an application.

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